

# Phantom Phinish

# Holloman launches last manned F-4G flight

by Master Sgt. Greg Henneman  
49th Fighter Wing History Office

After serving in manned flights for test and targets over the last three years at Holloman, Det. 1, 82nd Aerial Target Squadron flew the Air Force's last-ever manned F-4G March 16, marking the end of over 30 years of F-4G operations.

With the aircraft scheduled to be "de-manned," the old warbird which once served as a Wild Weasel in Desert Storm will soon end its service as an unmanned drone target.

By coincidence, this QF-4, tail number 69-0303, was flown in combat in 1991 as a Wild Weasel by Lt. Col. James S. Johnson, current director of operations for Det. 1, 53rd Test and Evaluation Group. The role of the specially modified F-4G was to ferret out enemy radar sites and suppress anti-aircraft threats.

As he prepared to fly the final mission, Lt. Col. Charles H. Hainline, commander, Det. 1,

82nd ATS, noted the significance of this last flight, "It is sad to see this model go away. This will be the last time anyone sees an F-4G fly with someone in it. There is no airplane that I know of that has ever matched the capability of the F-4G."

Emerging surface-to-air technologies in the 1960s created an imminent need for an airplane that could find and destroy these lethal threats. Initially using modified F-100s and later F-105s, the Wild Weasel mission came to service in late 1965.

In 1975, the G model of the F-4 took on the Wild Weasel mission and is the aircraft most associated with locking in on enemy radar and destroying surface-to-air batteries. Armed with the APR-47 computer and the High-speed Anti-Radiation Missile, the F-4G destroyed 254 radar sites during Desert Storm. Within the first 24 hours of the war, the Wild Weasels crippled Iraq's capability to launch radar guided surface-to-air missiles.



Photo by Mr. Tom Fuller

Lt. Col. Charles "Tuna" Hainline, commander, Det. 1, 82nd Aerial Targets Squadron, taxis on the Holloman runway during the final manned flight of the F-4G Phantom II March 16, while Lockheed Martin aircraft mechanic Mr. Sam Williams marshals the jet. The F-4 was marked "Pharwell F-4G" on the side for the final flight.



Courtesy photo

Then Capt. J. J. Johnson walks around his assigned F-4G tail number 303 in Bahrain in 1991 during Operation Desert Storm. The aircraft is now a QF-4 target drone. Now a lieutenant colonel, Colonel Johnson is the Director of Operations for Det. 1, 53rd Test and Evaluation Group at Holloman.



Photo by Mr. Tom Fuller

Colonel Hainline starts the F-4G's engines as Mr. Sam Williams marshals the jet on the Holloman runway before flight.



Photo by Mr. Tom Fuller

Colonel Hainline puts on his helmet before the F-4's last flight begins.



Photo courtesy of the 586th Flight Test Squadron

A manned F-4 flies over Holloman for the final time.